

**Fort Adams Foundation  
Meeting Notes**

**May 5, 2016**

Members Present:

Janet Coit, Chair & Director of DEM

Larry Mouradjian, Associate Director for DEM Natural Resources Bureau, representing DEM Parks and Recreation

Chris Behan, Esq., representing the City of Newport

Lee Whitaker, representing Rhode Island Historic Preservation

Others Present:

Joe Dias, Executive Director, Fort Adams Trust

Mary Kay, Executive Counsel, DEM

John Faltus, Deputy Chief, DEM Parks & Recreation

Bruce Thompson, Regional Manager, DEM Parks & Recreation

Terri Bisson, Chief Program Development, DEM Bureau of Natural Resources (meeting notes)

Jody Sullivan, Fort Adams Trust Board Member

Seth Bock, Greenleaf CCC, LLC

Matthew (Doc) Perry, FAT Volunteer Archivist

Eric Offenbergl, Fort Adams Trust Board Member

Kyle Cahoon, Park Manager, DEM Parks & Recreation

Meeting was called to order at 2:07 p.m.

Major Discussion Points, Agreements and Action Items:

1. Roll Call – See members present above.

2. Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Whitaker and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Behan to approve the minutes of January 28, 2016. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Action and Discussion Items

a. Fort Adams Trust Report – Chairwoman Coit, with agreement from members, moved the RI Bridge and Turnpike Authority Project to the first item under the Fort Adams Trust report.

i. RI Bridge and Turnpike Authority (RIBTA) Service Project – Mr. Offenbergl of the Fort Adams Trust Board of Directors provided an overview of a May 15 service project to open the south redoubt at Fort Adams. The project will be undertaken by attendees of the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA) Conference which will be held in Newport from May 15-17. There are 177 confirmed volunteers scheduled to take part, including conference attendees from 13 countries and members from the Maher Center and the local boys/girls club. The project will take place from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will include an opening

ceremony at 8:30 and a ribbon cutting to open the redoubt at 4 p.m. The Trust has secured over \$100,000 of in-kind services. Director Coit expressed support for the one-of-a-kind project and requested that the Trust document the in-kind contributions and to coordinate the press strategy with DEM's new communications director. Mr. Whitaker asked if the Trust was planning to video the event, stating that it would make a great documentary on the restoration of the historic redoubt, with its one-of-a-kind double helix staircase. Mr. Hall stated that the Trust hopes to authorize the funding to do so. The redoubt will open for guided tours after the service project is complete.

- ii. Strategic Planning & Fundraising Initiatives – The Trust has received a \$7,500 grant from the Rhode Island Foundation to complete a strategic plan. The grant will be announced soon. Director Coit asked about the Trust's plan to hire a professional fundraiser, and Mr. Hall reported that it was not in the budget at this time.
- iii. Capital Projects – Mr. Dias provided a spreadsheet of current capital projects, which included the northwest kitchen, the redoubt, fire safety upgrades, and the new education kiosk. Mr. Dias reported that the bids for lighting upgrades came in over budget so they had to modify the plans. The Trust is also waiting on delivery of an 8 person passenger Accessibility Cart, which they hope will increase access tours of the Fort. The Trust has also purchased a concession tent.
- iv. Annual Schedule of Events – Mr. Dias provided an updated Event Listing for 2016 and noted the annual Fort Adams Trust Summer Solstice Fundraiser which is scheduled to take place on Friday, June 24 from 6 to 10 p.m.
- v. Financial Reports – Ms. Bisson reported that the Trust provided Income Tax Form 990's for the years 2010 to 2014, which she emailed to members. Mr. Dias reported that the accountant had requested an extension for the 2015 taxes and they hope to have them completed sometime in June. Mr. Behan asked a few questions related to the Trust's administrative expenditures, which seemed high. He stated that it is the first thing potential donors look at when they consider making donations. Members discussed that administrative expenses included running the day-to-day operations of the Fort and educational and interpretive programming. Ms. Sullivan suggested that the Trust accountant look at the programming and operations expenses to see if they could be re-categorized. Mr. Behan re-iterated his desire to see the Trust move away from the model of raising funds just to cover its operating expenses to fundraising from other sources such as charitable donations and bequests in support of sustaining Fort infrastructure. Director Coit agreed and noted that the strategic planning initiative should guide the Trust toward broader fundraising. Mr. Hall asked about \$150,000 from the Folk and Jazz Festival that used to go to support Trust operations. Mr. Mouradjian stated

that the \$150,000 payment was part of a License Agreement that the State had with Newport Festivals when it was a for-profit entity and that the proceeds were split between the State and all Fort Adams tenants. The new License Agreement is with the non-profit Newport Festivals Foundation. Mr. Mouradjian noted that DEM has allowed the Trust to explore additional opportunities to raise operating funds, including offering food and beverages to patrons at the Visitor Center and soliciting bids for food concessions for events.

vi. Inventory of Assets – Mr. Perry reported that the inventory is complete and noted the discovery of 1873 map of the Fort. Mr. Perry also stated that there were no updates on the investigation into six unaccounted for items.

b. Fire Safety Evaluation –Mr. Dias told members that a number of corrective measures have been completed. DEM is preparing for the Fire Safety Board of Appeals and Review hearing in May regarding the occupancy.

c. Newport Festival Foundations (NFF) Lease Agreement – Ms. Bisson reported that the lease agreement between the Department and NFF for tenancy in Building 16 was approved by the National Park Service and State Properties Committee in April. Mr. Hall questioned why the lease had not been brought to the Foundation for approval. Ms. Coit reviewed the Foundation statute and noted that the Foundation's work is related to the Fort Adams structure and not the entire Fort.

4. Progress Reports:

a. DEM – Mr. Mouradjian reported that DEM is discussion the possibility of increasing ferry services to Fort Adams, especially during large events. DEM will keep members apprised of deliberations.

b. Fort Adams Trust – Mr. Dias reported that the Trust had solicited bids for food service at the Fort. The Trust received 5 interests, but only 2 followed through with bids. The Trust awarded the concession to Blackstone Caterers for one year with an option for 2. The Trust will re-evaluate to see how things go for them and for the Caterer.

c. Other – There were no other progress reports.

5. Other Business and Public Comment – Mr. Perry asked members for permission to host a medical marijuana awareness and trade show event inside the Fort and introduced Mr. Bock of Greenleaf CCC. Members expressed concern about the proposed event but agreed that the Fort Adams Trust is the appropriate entity to consider use of the inside of the Fort.

6. Adjourn – Mr. Behan made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whitaker and approved unanimously by members. The meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.